

NINE MEDITATIONS
ON THE
VIRTUES EXEMPLIFIED IN
THE LIFE OF
SAINT CLOUD

Suitable for use as a
novena in honor of the
saint, in preparation
for his feast-day,
September
seventh.

Adapted and arranged from the French by the
RT. REV. CAMILLE THIEBAUT, V. G.
and
VERY REV. MICHAEL N. KREMER, J. C. D.

Saint Cloud, Pray For Us

Saint Cloud, priest and confessor, is here shown wearing the chasuble of the holy priesthood and the ermine cape of royalty. The chain and cross of the order of St. Michael were added in Seventeenth and later century representations. This reproduction of a painting by Peter Martini in 1894 was suggested by the oldest venerated statue of the saint, a perfect replica of which is kept on an altar in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, St. Cloud.

Dedication

This booklet is offered in testimony of grateful acknowledgment to Saint Cloud for countless favors received through his intercession and for his abiding protection of the Orphans' Home dedicated to his honor in the Diocese of St. Cloud.

NIHIL OBSTAT

F. C. FALQUE

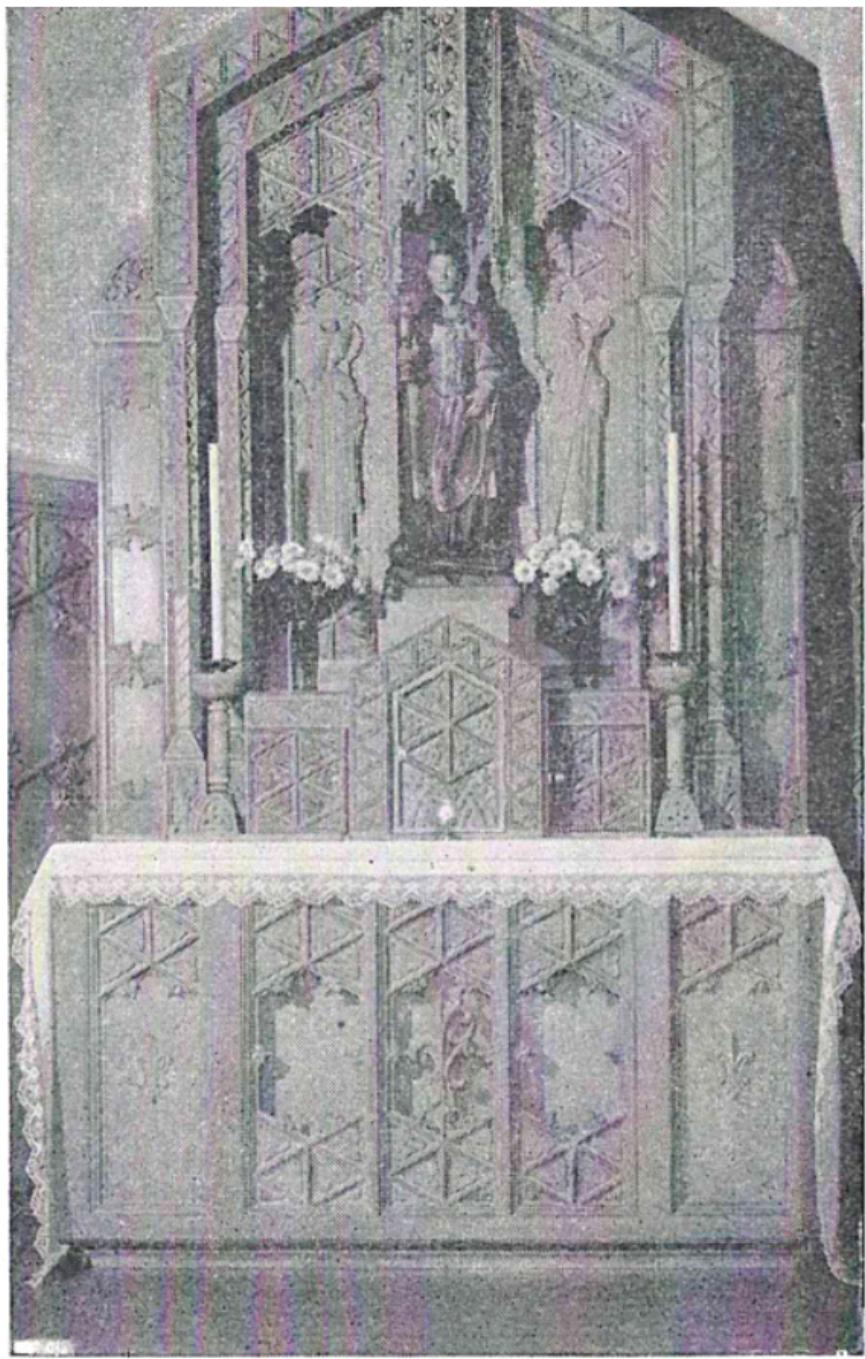
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IMPRIMATUR

✠ JOS. F. BUSCH

Episcopus S. Clodoaldi

December 8, 1942



Shrine of St. Cloud

Immaculate Conception Cathedral
St. Cloud, Minnesota

This permanent shrine of St. Cloud was erected in the St. Cloud cathedral church in 1942. It represents the fulfillment of a promise made by the Most Rev. Bishop Joseph F. Busch, D.D. in 1922 when he attended the fourteenth centenary of the birth of St. Cloud in St. Cloud in France. The statue of the saint was given to Bishop Busch at that time by the pastor of the old church of St. Cloud for his cathedral. The right arm holding the chalice was taken from the oldest known statue of the saint and incorporated into an exact replica. It stands as the center piece on an altar shrine in which relics of St. Cloud, of the True Cross and Our Lord's Seamless Robe are encased in compartments of safe construction. St. Clothilde and St. Remigius are represented in carved relief in the background. On feast days the relics are exposed for the veneration of the faithful. The shrine occupies a small circular chapel on the north side of the cathedral.

Saint Cloud, Priest and Confessor

St. Cloud, also known as Clodoald, born in 522 near Paris, was the son of King Clodomir of Orleans and grandson of King Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks. When but a helpless child of two years he and his two brothers, Thibauld and Gunther, were left defenseless orphans in a turbulent and lawless age by the death in battle of their father. Two unscrupulous uncles plotted to murder the children and add their kingdom to their own realms. Taking the children to one of their castles they themselves ruthlessly assassinated Thibauld and Gunther; St. Cloud, however, was saved in an almost miraculous manner when his saintly grandmother, Clotilde, was able to flee with him to a place of security. There he spent his childhood, learning from her by word and example those lessons which later inspired him to renounce the world for the service of God.

When St. Cloud reached the age of manhood many powerful friends offered to win back his throne by force of arms. Realizing however that this could only be done by a bloody civil war, with its attendant horrors and the impoverishment of innocent thousands, and reflecting on the vanity of worldly power and glory, he generously resolved to renounce his rights and

to leave his uncles in possession of the inheritance of which they had despoiled him. To prove the sincerity of his determination he himself cut off his long hair, a distinction at that time reserved to members of the royal family, thus irrevocably surrendering all his rights and claims to nobility. Then, a proof that nobility is a quality of the soul rather than a result of the accident of birth, he made his sacrifice complete by entirely renouncing the world and consecrating himself to the service of God in prayer, in penance and in the practice of humility.

The next years of St. Cloud's life were spent in solitude, in the wilderness near Paris, where he placed himself entirely under the guidance of an humble hermit, St. Severin. With a saint as his teacher, the Holy Scriptures as his text books, and humility and obedience as interpreters, St. Cloud quickly learned the lesson of holiness and applied it in his own life, so well indeed, that in a short while throngs of people of good will flocked to him for guidance and counsel. Distrustful of his ability to guide others, the humble saint fled to even deeper solitude in the Provence country, but to no avail. There also devout souls quickly recognized a saint and again crowded around him for help in their spiritual struggle.

Realizing that it was the will of God that he give up his solitude, St. Cloud returned to his former place near Paris, to Nogent on the

Seine, now known as the village of St. Cloud. Here he was ordained a priest and established a monastery where he lived with his disciples in the religious life until the end. But his activities were not limited to the monastery. Daily he went among the poor and the neglected, teaching them the Word of God, consoling the afflicted, reconciling enemies, helping the needy and delivering from their oppressors those who suffered injustice. As soon as his uncles were convinced that he had definitely renounced all claims to his inheritance, of which they had despoiled him, they made him their official almoner, the dispenser of the large sums of money which they regularly contributed for works of charity and religion. And with their powerful influence they supported his efforts to correct abuses and to bring peace and order into the distracted land. Thus he labored until he was called to his reward in 560. Although only 38 years old when he died, his work and his influence were powerful forces in the service of the Church which was laboring to establish the Christian culture, of recognition of man's just obligations to God and his fellow man, among the races of Europe that were just emerging from barbarism.

In our days we are witnessing an alarming reversion to the savagery and barbarism, to the terrifying disregard of the rights of God and man, of the property and even the lives of our fellow man, that St. Cloud fought so might-

ily in his day. And if we are to be successful in our combat against these evils, we must employ the means that he employed; personal holiness, unselfish service of others and the giving of an example which will draw others back to the love and service of God. Today, as in that day, Christians are to be the salt of the earth to cure the world of decay and corruption. Study of the life of St. Cloud and of the other saints will show us how to meet this challenge, how to be true and effective soldiers of Christ the King, ever spending ourselves to help spread His Kingdom of peace and love on earth.

**NINE MEDITATIONS
FOR A NOVENA IN HONOR OF
SAINT CLOUD**

The Saints of God are the glory of the Church. They are her children who, ever mindful of her teachings and obedient to her counsels, overcame the world, the flesh and the devil and, after their departure from this world, were exalted by God to occupy the seats of his special friends in heaven. Our Holy Mother Church points with pride, and rightfully so, to these her heroic children, places their images on her altars and encourages the faithful to praise and revere them. For they have achieved that most difficult goal, conquest of themselves.

The Church also urges us to ask these, our glorified brothers and sisters, to intercede for us before God. Surely, they will be warmly interested in the welfare of their younger brethren in the family of mankind. And if the Heavenly Father will not ignore the humble prayer of the most miserable sinner, how much more readily and graciously will be listen to the requests of the Saints who, for love of Him, gave up the world with all its pleasures—yes, when called upon, gave up their very lives as the final, full measure of their devotion to Him.

But we can hardly expect the saints to help us with their prayers before God unless we strive to make ourselves worthy of their assistance; unless we strive perseveringly for virtue. And when in our struggle for perfection we turn to the Church for guidance, she again leads us to her saints and bids us learn from them. For in their lives we can best see what we must do and what we must avoid, if we wish to attain salvation.

It is in this spirit of the Church that these little meditations on the life of St. Cloud are offered. Living in an age of change and upheaval, St. Cloud was the latest, and possibly one of the brightest in that galaxy of saints who in the fifth century blazed the road that led from the slough of despairing, pagan barbarism in which the peoples of Central Europe, of France and Germany and the neighboring countries, were still lost, to that glorious and joyful City of God, the Christian civilization of the coming centuries. And if this little booklet will but help to guide some faltering feet through our present days of change and upheaval, of doubt and despair, its purpose will have been achieved.

FIRST DAY

THE IMPORTANCE THAT ST. CLOUD ATTACHED TO THE MATTER OF SAVING HIS SOUL

1st Point: Although still a tender child when he was saved as by a miracle from a violent death, St. Cloud never lost the vivid remembrance of that horrible day when his two brothers were murdered and his own life was threatened. With a heart filled with gratitude to God for His loving care, he ever remembered that in the midst of life we stand at death's door, and acted accordingly.

During the course of our life Divine Providence has often preserved us from danger and death. How often in our younger days did we recklessly expose our health and our very lives. Today, in our work and in our play, in our homes and in travel, in times of pestilence and war, God ever protects us. Have we shown ourselves grateful for this divine protection? And are we mindful of the sword of death that ever hangs above our heads? Do we often meditate on the warning of our Lord, that the Master of Life may at any time send the angel of death to call us; that most likely he will come unexpectedly, as a "thief in the night?" And do WE act accordingly?

Made familiar with the thought of death by his own narrow escape,
2nd Point: St. Cloud early realized that an inordinate love of honors, wealth or any other worldly things may only too easily lead us to forget God and the welfare of our souls. To guard himself against such a disaster he, when he came of age, renounced all his claims to the kingdom of Orleans, which had been stolen from him, and determined to devote his life to poverty and prayer as a hermit.

Contrary to the example of the Saint do we perhaps try to raise ourselves above others, not that we may the better serve God and our neighbor, but rather to gain the world's esteem? Do we forget God and endanger our salvation by our inordinate striving for worldly goods and honors? And yet, how brief is the time that we can enjoy them.

St. Cloud renounced all the honors and wealth that the world had in store for him.
3d Point: Freed from worldly cares and ambitions he now could devote himself entirely to the business of saving his soul. He retired into solitude and there meditated on that one and only important subject—the salvation of his immortal soul. By strict examinations of conscience, by persevering prayer and harsh self-denial he fought the evil inclinations of his body and forced them into the service of God.

This is an example for us. The saving of our souls is for us also our most important affair, that we must bring to a successful conclusion. Pray God that in our management of this business we may also frequently, at least every Sunday, check up on our spiritual condition by an honest, unflinching examination of conscience. For in this way only can be discover our faults and learn our ruling passions, against which we must guard in a special way. Then we will in daily prayer ask God's aid and often receive the Sacraments to strengthen ourselves in the spiritual warfare. And in so doing we will please God and by a saintly life prepare for ourselves a happy eternity.

At the end of this and the following meditations recite these prayers in honor of St. Cloud:

V. St. Cloud, pray for us

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

O God, Who didst deign to glorify with the office of the priesthood and the splendor of all the virtues the Blessed Cloud who, for Thy sake, humbled himself in this world: grant, we beseech Thee, that, urged by his example we may serve Thee worthily, and by his inter-

cession progress constantly in grace and merit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Three 'Our Fathers' and 'Hail Marys', and after each 'Hail Mary' the invocation: 'St. Cloud, pray for us.'

SECOND DAY

FAITHFULNESS OF ST. CLOUD IN FOLLOW- ING HIS VOCATION

1st Point: When we have learned, and when we thoroughly understand, that the saving of our souls is our most important business, our chief concern will be to find the best possible means to help us carry out successfully this all important affair, and to remove energetically any and all obstacles that might hinder us in this work. So it was with St. Cloud. Inspired by God he generously resolved to leave the world completely, so that he might devote himself entirely to this work.

2nd Point: Faithful to the guidance of that divine light which showed him that things of this earth are as nothing in comparison to the things of heaven, St. Cloud, although the son of a king, humbly asked to be the disciple of an obscure hermit, who was only known for his holiness. In obedience to this man's guidance he persevered in prayer, in the study of the Scriptures and in mortification of the senses.

3d Point: When the time came for us to choose our state of life, did we ask God for guidance? Did we try to find out what His will was in our regard? And when it was made clear to us, with what amount of good will and generosity did we accept it and make it the rule of our lives? Do we now fulfill the duties and responsibilities of our state of life, and do we do this through motives of faith or merely to satisfy our earthly desires and personal ambitions? Do we fulfill our duties conscientiously, worthily and faithfully, so that they thus become powerful means in our fight for salvation and an abundant source of merits for a blessed eternity?

THIRD DAY

HUMILITY OF ST. CLOUD, HIS LOVE OF THE HIDDEN LIFE

1st Point: The son of a king renounces the splendor of a throne, the glory of wearing a crown, to retire into solitude. He leaves the capitol city and its society where, because of his talents, his personal qualities and his high rank of nobility, he could have occupied an honored position. And to escape the esteem and respect of others, he retires into solitude and places himself under the guidance of a poor hermit lest, relying on himself, he might go wrong. This was St. Cloud and this also was the wonderful example of humility he left for us to admire and to imitate.

St. Cloud retired from the world

2nd Point: because God gave him to understand that this was the best way to lead a virtuous life. But throngs of people from nearby Paris soon disturbed him in his prayer and meditation by seeking his counsel, which he did not feel competent to give. He therefore retired into far-off Provence. But here also his sanctity soon shown forth and people again flocked to him. Unable to remain in solitude, as he desired, he returned to the country near Paris and thenceforth lived in a monastery which he built, located at Nogent on the Seine, today called the city of St. Cloud.

Why do we so ardently desire and

3d Point: cultivate the esteem of others? Why so much ambition to raise ourselves above the position for which God intended us? Why do we delight in the passing pleasures and excitements of the world? It is because we permit ourselves to be ruled by our pride, our ambition, our love of wealth and pleasure. Do we think that we are better or wiser than the Saints, or that the rules of the Gospel apply only to Saints and not to us?

FOURTH DAY

THE LOVE OF ST. CLOUD FOR THE SACRED WORD OF GOD

1st Point: During the early centuries of the Church Christians always had great veneration for the Holy Bible, the Word of God. They carried it with them, bound it in rich materials or kept it in costly reliquaries and knelt whenever they read the Gospels. Many of them spent much time and labor in learning Greek and the Oriental languages, so that they might be able to read and study the Old and New Testaments in the languages in which they were originally written. In our times how few of us make it a practice to read the Holy Scriptures and to profit by meditating on them?

2nd Point: Like all the Saints, St. Cloud delighted in reading the sacred writings and meditated on their teachings, devoting thereto the greater part of his time. Here he found the truths that God revealed and the rules He gave to guide man on the way to heaven. It is indeed through these books that the Holy Ghost speaks to us, inspires us to see clearly God's will, and gives us courage to fight the wickedness of the flesh. Do we appreciate the tremendous honor God showed us by speaking to us? Are we grateful for

Christ's teachings which are preserved in His own words in the Gospels?

How much respect do we have for
3d Point: the Holy Scriptures? More particularly, are we obedient to the wonderful lessons they teach us? And if we are too indifferent to keep and read them at home, we should at least eagerly listen to them and to their explanations in sermons in church. Our Holy Mother Church received the special mission to teach us when the Savior said: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Mt. XXVIII. 19-20).

FIFTH DAY

ST. CLOUD'S LOVE OF PRAYER

The time which St. Cloud did not
1st Point: spend in reading the Word of God was spent in prayer. In fact, he prayed continually because, while reading the Holy Scriptures, his heart was lifted to God, their Author. He loved solitude precisely because there he could more freely converse with his Divine Master. And after being ordained a priest, he built a monastery where, seven times each day, the praises of God were solemnly chanted.

2nd Point: In our days there are too many lukewarm Catholics who consider time spent in prayer as lost; who look upon others who devote themselves to prayer as useless members of society, as fools and parasites. But history shows that the really great men, such as the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, whose writings are the finest products of the human mind, as also the founders of our universities and charitable institutions of all kinds, prayed without cease and found in their prayers the inspiration for their labors in the service of their fellow men, and the strength and courage to carry them out. There is not a single Saint who was not a man of prayer.

3d Point: In view of these facts how can we possibly think little of prayer? Did not Christ Himself teach us that prayer is the best means of reaching the heart of God when, after having given us that beautiful prayer, the 'Our Father', He urged us to pray and promised: "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Lk. I. 9). Must we not confess that it is our lack of faith and our laziness that makes us indifferent to prayer? May St. Cloud obtain for us the grace of fervor and perseverance in our daily prayers.

SIXTH DAY

ST. CLOUD'S LOVE OF PENANCE

1st Point: Although brought up in the shadow of a throne, with all its power and grandeur, St. Cloud early comprehended the vanity and the dangers of worldly pleasure. He fled from the royal court to bury himself in solitude and the hardships of the hermit's life. Long hours of prayer by day and by night, continual fasting, coarse garments to wear, a few hours of sleep on hard boards; this was now his rule of life and in this he persevered to the end.

2nd Point: This mortification of the body and its senses was but a feeble expression of the interior mortification which St. Cloud practised. He held his imagination in check through strict recollection; he bent his will under the yoke of obedience; and he fought against the temptations of pride and self-love by profound and sincere humility. In short, he detached himself completely from affection for the things of earth by ever closer union with God. And the treasures which his royal relatives gave him, he distributed in charity.

3d Point: It is true indeed that not all Christians are called to practise extraordinary mortifications, such as we have described. But all are bound to work out

their salvation by closely guarding their senses and bringing the unruly bodily appetites under the control of their minds, so that the soul may free itself from the bonds of the flesh and obey the laws of God. It is only through penance that we can make up for our past sins and save ourselves from future falls. We must practise mortification, because it is the very soul of a Christian life.

SEVENTH DAY

ST. CLOUD'S LOVE OF HIS BROTHERS IN RELIGION AND OF THE POOR

1st Point: During long years St. Cloud had strengthened in himself the virtues of the life of a hermit and a religious. Now he could, without being presumptuous, be a teacher for those who had joined him in his solitude and placed themselves under his direction. But it is almost impossible to describe with what kindness and consideration he instructed and directed them. He edified them by his example and won their hearts by his humility and love, so that their life in solitude, under such a kind and saintly guide, became for them the source of peace and happiness.

From the day when he renounced

2nd Point: the world St. Cloud remained completely detached from the things of earth. Everything he had was given to the Church in Paris or to other churches. He only loved the poor. Daily he gathered them to instruct them and to give to them as alms whatever was given to him. On one occasion he even gave the garments he wore to a poor man who was in need of them.

What charity do we have for others?

3d Point: When asked, do we give to worthy causes or do we make excuses for refusing, either by finding fault with the cause or with the person asking? Are we kind to those with whom we live and patient with their faults? Do we help the poor? Are we willing to make real sacrifices to help the needy and the charitable institutions that help them? And if we have not the means to help them, do we at least show sympathy to those in suffering and prove it by visiting the sick and the unfortunate, and comforting them as well as we can?

EIGHTH DAY

THE ZEAL OF ST. CLOUD FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

1st Point: The battle cry which St. Ignatius of Loyola gave to the Jesuits, 'Everything for the greater honor and glory of God', admirably sums up and expresses the sentiment which dominated the life of every saint. Those who love God above all are naturally inflamed with desire that He be known, loved and glorified in all hearts, and use all their resources in promoting this end. St. Cloud also had a heart filled with this same desire: Everything for the greater honor and glory of God.

2nd Point: The sacrifices which St. Cloud made are a striking proof of his zeal. Our Lord said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jn. XV. 13). And a man lays down his life not only by dying, but also by renouncing all that is rightfully his, to consecrate himself entirely to the service of those he loves. St. Cloud did this when he refused the throne with all its honors and comforts, to embrace humility, poverty and mortification. He renounced everything to live only for God. And his purpose in building a monastery was to fur-

ther promote the glory of God by seeing that there His praises should be chanted night and day.

3d Point: In our days personal or material

Where are the faithful who, out of devotion to God, seek first to please Him and to promote His glory? At least let us resolve to battle our evil inclinations, which are opposed to the holy will of God. Remember the words of our Savior: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Mt. XVI. 24). That is the price we must pay if we wish to glorify God.

NINTH DAY

THE DEATH OF ST. CLOUD AND HIS TRIUMPH IN HEAVEN

1st Point: After a life entirely consecrated to the service of his Lord; after years of perseverance and continual growth in virtue; St. Cloud awaited his last day with calmness and holy joy. To prepare himself for his voyage into eternity he had retired to Nogent on the Seine, today called the city of St. Cloud. God, by a special grace, had made known to him that his life on earth was reaching its end. This but served to increase his

fervor. And so, having received the Last Sacraments, his soul returned to its Creator.

2nd Point: St. Cloud has already enjoyed the happiness and glory of heaven for over 1500 years, the reward for his life of self-denial, of penance and sacrifice. And what must that glory and happiness be for him who had given up everything and spent himself in the service of God, Who in turn even reserves a special crown for him who but gives a glass of water in His name. The many favors obtained through his intercession are the most striking proofs of the glory and power which St. Cloud enjoys in heaven.

3d Point: We dread death, and we have good reason to dread it, because we neglect to prepare ourselves for a happy death. We can hardly expect a favorable judgment and an eternal reward unless we are prepared to pay the price which the Saints paid. Let us see to it that we practise the virtues of which they have given us the example. Let us pray to them, and especially to our patron Saint, St. Cloud, that they may obtain for us the courage and generosity to make any sacrifices that God may ask for us. Then our last hours will hold no terrors for us. Confidence in the infinite mercy of God will drive out fear, and the hope of everlasting happiness with God, with His saints and with all those whom we loved on earth, will fill our hearts with consolation. Amen.